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CLEAN WATER STATE REVOLVING LOAN FUND PROGRAM

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION

TO: All Interested Citizens, Government Agencies and Public Groups

In accordance with the Nebraska Clean Water State Revolving Fund environmental review process, which is based on the National Environmental Policy Act, an environmental review has been performed on the proposed agency action below:

This information reviews the environmental impact likely from a project. This project is planned to be federally funded wholly or in part through your tax dollars; therefore, you are entitled to take part in its review. If you have concerns about the environmental impact of this project, please provide them at this time. The Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality (NDEQ) encourages public input in this decision-making process.

PROJECT NAME: Emergency Sewer Force Main Replacement  
APPLICANT: Alma, Nebraska  
COUNTY: Harlan County  
POPULATION: 1,133 (2010 Census)  
CWSRF PROJECT NUMBER: C317750  
NDEQ ID No.: 57632  
TOTAL PROJECT AMOUNT: \$161,800  
NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF ROADS CONTRIBUTION: \$71,800  
ESTIMATED CWSRF LOAN AMOUNT: \$90,000

The City of Alma is located in Harlan County in southwestern Nebraska. The 2010 census population was 1,133. Alma's wastewater collection system includes a 6 inch Ductile Iron force main which had originally been attached to the Hwy 183 bridge crossing of the Republican River. The force main is currently found below the bridge and immediately above the river surface. Sewage is pumped from the City through the force main across the river to the City's two cell lagoon and land application system south of the river. The force main is in need of immediate replacement due to the risk of the line being washed out and also needs relocation as the hwy bridge is being replaced. The Nebraska Department of Roads is providing a \$71,800 contribution for the relocation of the force main. The City plans replacing approximately 1,000 linear feet of 6" force main by directional boring and setting back the force main 20 feet from the replacement bridge construction limits. The Corps of Engineers commented on the project and stated that the project will not require a Section 404 permit. The replacement force main will parallel the existing line, but will be drilled further east of the existing force main. In addition, the valves on either side of the river will be replaced with new and force main cleanouts will be installed on either side of the river. The existing force main will be abandoned and removed upon completion and placing into service of the new directionally bored force main. Drawings and specifications were approved by this Department in January 2016, and a Construction Permit No. 15-0208 was issued.

The project is eligible for financing through the Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund (CWSRF) and is listed on the FY2016 Intended Use Plan (IUP). Alma qualifies for a 20-year loan at a current program interest rate of 1.5 percent. In addition to principal and interest payments, an administrative fee of 1.0 percent of the outstanding principal balance would be assessed each year.

Sewer use fees would be pledged to repay the loan. Current residential sewer use rates are a metered rate of \$6.42 per month plus \$0.55 per 1,000 gallon for winter water usage December through March. The City of Alma is estimated to have approximately 500 sewer connections. Sewer rates would need to be raised by \$1.12 per month to cover the debt service and 10% coverage requirement. This would equate to an average sewer rate of \$11.94 per month for 8,000 gallons winter water use per month.

The project will have a positive impact on the environment by preventing a raw sewage bypass into the Republican River and Harlan County Reservoir. The project will result in continued wastewater transmission and treatment of sewage flows from the City with a lowered risk of future failure of the force main, which could result in a release of untreated sewage into the Republican River which immediately flows into the Harlan County Reservoir. Alma's wastewater as collected by their gravity sanitary sewer system and pumped through their force main, is treated in their 2-cell lagoon and land application facility south of the Republican River.

The review did not indicate a significant environmental impact would result from the proposed action. The project is located inside the 100 year flood plain of the Republican River. The project will apply for a permit to construct in the flood plain from the flood plain administrator of the City of Alma. The force main will be installed by directional boring and will not require a Section 404 COE Permit. The project will monitor for nesting and migratory birds, which could be disturbed by construction. Most migratory birds nesting in Nebraska occurs between April 1 and July 15. If construction occurs during times which may affect migratory birds, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service recommends a qualified biologist conduct a field survey to determine their presence. The construction contract documents will require the contractor to satisfy the requirements of the Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act. The project does not discriminate against any segment of the community's population nor suffers disproportionately from human health or environmental effects.

The project was reviewed for eligibility for a categorical exclusion from National Environmental Policy Act review specified in 40 CFR (Code of Federal Regulations) Part 6.204. The project meets all criteria described in the above reference and the Department has determined that this project is eligible for categorical exclusion. Consequently, a preliminary decision has been made that a Finding of No Significant Impact will not be prepared. The project as proposed is solely replacement of existing facilities.

Justification for categorical exclusion includes:

- The proposed action is not known or expected to have potentially significant environmental impacts on the quality of the human environment either individually or cumulatively over time;
- The proposed action is not known or expected to significantly affect federally listed threatened or endangered species or their critical habitat;
- The proposed action is not known or expected to significantly affect national natural landmarks or any property with nationally significant historic, architectural, prehistoric archeological or cultural value, including but not limited to, property listed on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places;
- The proposed action is not known or expected to significantly affect environmentally important natural resource areas as wetlands, prime farmland, floodplains, wild and scenic rivers, and



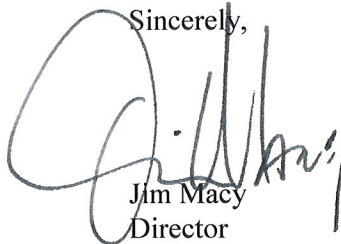
significant fish or wildlife habitat. The existing force main is in the 100 year floodplain and will be flood proofed to 1 foot above the base flood elevation for the valve box and cleanout covers.

- The proposed action is not known or expected to have a significant effect on the pattern and type of land use (industrial, commercial, agricultural, recreational, residential) or growth and distribution of population including altering the character of existing residential areas, or may not be consistent with state or local government, or federally-recognized Indian tribe approved land use plans or federal land management plans.
- The proposed action is not known or expected to cause significant public controversy about a potential environmental impact of the proposed action.

The Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality shall revoke the categorical exclusion and shall require a full environmental review if, subsequent to the granting of exclusion, the state determines that the proposed project no longer meets the requirements for a categorical exclusion due to changes in the proposed project; or new evidence reveals that serious local or environmental issues exist; or federal, state, local or tribal laws are being violated.

This action is taken on the basis of careful review of the application and other supporting data, which are on file in the office of the NDEQ. These are available for public review upon request. Persons having a comment on this categorical exclusion determination are encouraged to submit such comments directly to Tom Fuenning, Review Engineer, of the Technical Assistance Section of NDEQ, who can be reached at (402) 471-4989 or email: [tom.fuenning@nebraska.gov](mailto:tom.fuenning@nebraska.gov).

Signed this 23<sup>rd</sup> day of February, 2016.

Sincerely,  
  
Jim Macy  
Director

JM/tsf

Attachments:

Distribution List

Map and Consultant's Report

## CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DISTRIBUTION LIST

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711 West Main  
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(Public Information Only not for Public Notice)

NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT:  
Lower Republican NRD  
PO Box 618  
706 2<sup>nd</sup> Street  
Alma, NE 68920

# ALMA SOUTH BRIDGE FORCE MAIN RELOCATION



2/12/2016

Force Main Relocation

Letter Report for the exposed force main over the Republican River and potential conflicts between the new abutments and Alma sewer force main with lowest responsive responsible bid for relocation.



# Alma South Bridge Force Main Relocation

## FORCE MAIN RELOCATION

### Background

The Nebraska Department of Roads (NDOR) is in the preliminary design phase of replacing abutments on the bridge south of Alma. The City of Alma has a sanitary sewer force main located in the shoulder of the driving surface and runs under the bridge. There are existing force main valves on each end of the bridge, however the primary concern is the force main which is exposed under the bridge as well as construction of the new abutments and their potential conflict with the existing force main. Additionally, the existing force main which was designed in 1979 and consists of 6" ductile iron pipe is completely exposed and shown in **Figure 1 – Existing Exposed Force Main**. NDOR has agreed to partially reimburse the City for expenses incurred with the evaluation, engineering, and construction of the relocation of the sanitary sewer force main to at least 20 feet beyond the bridge construction activities. This will provide adequate cover needed.

**FIGURE 1**  
**EXISTING EXPOSED FORCE MAIN**

